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ABSTRACT

This report documents the purpose and results for each information source used in the evaluation of the 1984-85 State Compensatory Education (SCE) program by providing a look at programs traditionally funded by SCE: (1) elementary instruction; (2) guidance and counseling; (3) Project Achieve; (4) Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) Program; (5) Texas Assessment of Basic Skills; and (6) Management Information System. The results indicated two major positive findings. First, seventh-grade TBE participants made strong growth as evidenced by gains in reading, language and mathematics scores. Eighth-grade TBE students made greater than expected gains in reading and mathematics. Second, all SCE-eligible, Hispanic limited-English-proficient students in schools without bilingually certified SCE teachers had access to other bilingually certified classroom teachers. Major findings that require further action indicate that: (1) there are questions as to whether the program fully focused on the target population; (2) the majority of SCE teachers continue to use pull-out formats for delivery of instruction, for a variety of reasons; and (3) Project Achieve appears to lack visibility. (Author/PN)

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A LOOK AT STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION IN AISD 1984-85

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report documents the purpose and results for each information source used in the evaluation of the 1984-85 SCE program.

MAJOR POSITIVE FINDINGS:

1. Seventh-grade Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) participants made strong growth as evidenced by gains in ITBS reading, language, and mathematics scores. Eighth-grade (TBE) students made greater than expected gains in reading and mathematics.

2. All SCE-eligible, Hispanic LEP students in schools without bilingually certified SCE teachers had access to other bilingually certified classroom teachers.

MAJOR FINDINGS REQUIRING ACTION:

1. SCE teachers served a small proportion of SCE-eligible students (23%) plus a significant number of students who were not SCE-eligible. Thirty-two percent of the total number of students served were not SCE-eligible. This raises questions as to whether the program fully focused on the target population for which it was funded.

2. The majority of SCE teachers continue to use pull-out formats for delivery of instruction, for a variety of reasons.

3. Project Achieve appears to lack visibility.

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FINAL SUMMARY

WHAT IS THE SCE PROGRAM?

The funding of compensatory education by the state underwent a dramatic change with the passage of House Bill 72. Biennial funding of the State Compensatory Education Program at about $1 million dollars per year was replaced by $6 million in minimum foundation funds based on the District's number of low-income students and earmarked for unrestricted use by the District for compensatory education programs.

The result was a transition year in which the programs previously funded by SCE continued much as before while the remainder of the SCE funds were targeted for programs traditionally provided from other sources. This report provides a final look at programs traditionally funded by SCE.

Elementary Instruction

In 11 elementary schools, a total of 12 full-time and four part-time SCE teachers of whom six have either bilingual or ESL certification, provided assistance to students at or below the 30th percentile in either language arts/reading or mathematics. The principal at each SCE campus and the SCE teacher determined if SCE instruction was to be primary or supplemental, the grades to be served, and the areas of service (reading, language arts, or mathematics). The principal and the SCE teacher, along with the assistance of the SCE coordinator, decided what teaching format was the most appropriate for the school's needs.

In either primary or supplemental instruction and regardless of teaching mode, the SCE teacher met with each student on a regularly scheduled basis.

SCE teachers received assistance from three instructional coordinators, one of whom assumed responsibility for leadership and coordination.

Guidance and Counseling

A total of 38 counselors provided counseling services to students at 49 elementary schools. Of these counselors, 24 were funded 20% to 80% out of SCE funds. One counselor was funded 100% from special education funds and fourteen 100% from local funds.

The counseling services included individual and small-group counseling, classroom interventions, and consultation with teachers, parents, and special-services personnel. The counselors also coordinated all available services and resources to assist each child to develop his/her maximum potential. These services and resources included standardized test coordination and administration, vision and hearing tests, Local Support Team meetings, and community agency contacts.

Secondary Instruction

The Secondary Component included Project Achieve and Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) instruction. The Junior High School Summer School Program was also funded by SCE but will be evaluated in a separate report.

Project Achieve

The major goal of Project Achieve is "to raise the reading achievement test scores of students who read at all levels of reading proficiency." The project provides for two reading specialists on each secondary school campus; SCE provided for 18 of the reading specialists and three project aides. Project Achieve is the only program newly funded by SCE to be examined in this report.

TBE Program

Four transitional bilingual education teachers served 88 LEP junior high school students. The entire program is currently housed at Murchison. Funds were provided for staff and materials. A full-time ESOL bilingual aide was also available for the TBE program.

Planning

The Planning Component consisted of a grants planning coordinator and a secretary. The grants planning coordinator coordinated the completion of forms to TEA, budget planning with component coordinators, and general technical assistance to different components as requested. The grants planning coordinator also assisted in the monitoring process for compensatory grants.

Evaluation

In addition to preparing the evaluation design, the technical report, and this final report of the SCE Program, the SCE Evaluation Component (evaluator, half-time programmer, and half-time secretary) was responsible for the administration of the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) and the dissemination of the results.

In response to the central information need created by legislation (H.B. 72) regarding Annual Performance Reports to the Texas Education Agency, the SCE evaluator coordinated efforts to create a series of computer screens which contain information about each school on as many as 23 variables.

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION

Who was served by SCE elementary teachers?

- Of 6724 students in grades 1 through 6 in 11 schools with an SCE teacher, 1738 had scores at the 30th percentile or below in reading or mathematics making them eligible for services from the SCE teacher. Teachers were encouraged to use standardized test scores to determine students' eligibility.
- On the average, SCE teachers served 30 SCE-eligible students each.
- SCE teachers reported that 407 students, 23% of those eligible, received services from four part-time and twelve full-time SCE teachers.
- 188 non-SCE-eligible students were served by SCE teachers. This figure constitutes 32% of the total number of students served by SCE teachers.
- Of 1405 students eligible for services in reading/language arts, 28% were served.
- Of 1144 students eligible for services in mathematics 2% were served.
- Four students, less than 1% of those served, had missing or incomplete ITBS scores from 1984; 10 students, 2% of those served, had missing or incomplete ITBS scores from 1985.
- In no case did SCE eligible, Hispanic LEP students in schools without bilingually certified SCE teachers not have access to other bilingually certified teachers. Two half-time bilingually certified SCE teachers served 10 bilingual students, all of whom had a bilingually certified teacher available at their school and/or grade level.

What is the impact of SCE teachers on low-achieving students?

Several analyses were conducted to address this question. After examining the results of these analyses, it is clear that no conclusions can be drawn with confidence. The general trend seems to be that SCE-served students are making gains, but the data do not offer a clear-cut interpretation of what these gains mean.

How did SCE students' gains compare with the gains of other low-achieving students in the District?

A comparison of gains attained by students in different compensatory programs shows that the gains by SCE students are comparable to the gains of students served by the other compensatory programs. The Chapter 1 Program provides supplemental reading instruction to low-achieving students in schools with above-average concentrations of low-income students. The Schoolwide Projects component of the Chapter 1 Program provides a 15-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio at grades K-3 at two schools, and the Migrant Program provides supplemental reading instruction to migrant students.

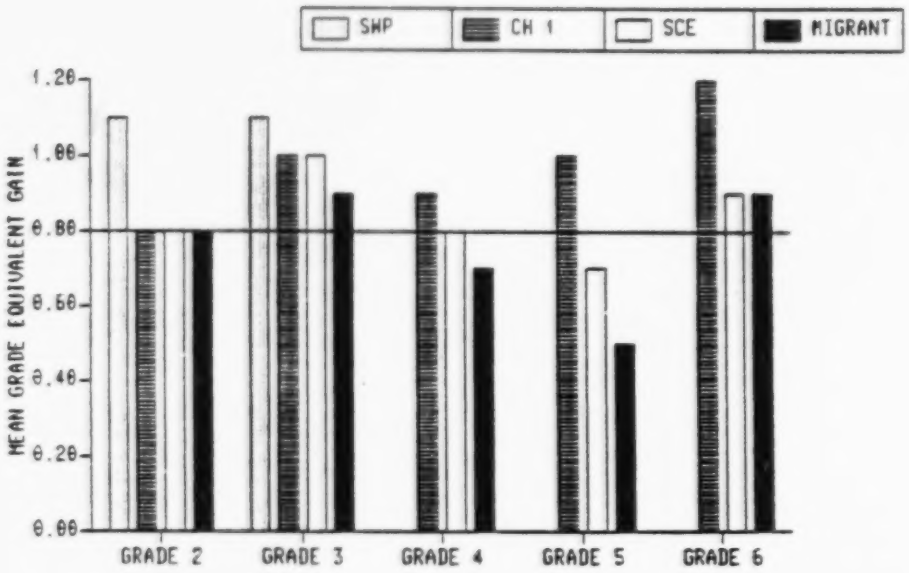

Figure 1: GRADE EQUIVALENT GAINS COMPARISONS OF ITBS READING TOTAL FOR STUDENTS SERVED BY CHAPTER 1 REGULAR, STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION (SCE), THE MIGRANT PROGRAM, AND THE LOW-ACHIEVING STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOLWIDE PROJECT SCHOOLS.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The 1984-1985 evaluation plan for the SCE Elementary Guidance and Counseling Component focused on two areas:

- the total number of students served by elementary counselors, and
- the ways in which those students are served (crisis versus all other types of interventions).

A new scannable record sheet was developed to reduce counselors' paperwork and to promote uniformity in record keeping. Information gathered through these records is presented here.*

How many students were served by elementary counselors?

- 43,246 direct student interventions were made by counselors for the coding period.

Figure 2 presents the contexts in which these interventions were made by the counselors.

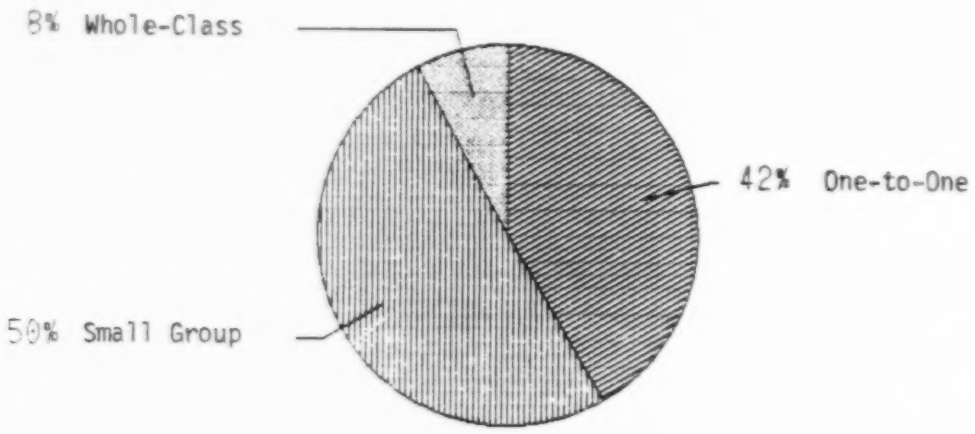

Figure 2: CONTEXTS OF COUNSELOR INTERVENTION.

***All figures reflect the coding period of November 6, 1984 to May 15, 1985 for 35 of the 38 elementary counselors. THE DATA CANNOT BE PRESUMED TO REFLECT A "NORMAL" YEAR'S WORK ON THE PART OF ALL THE COUNSELORS.**

- Additionally, 35,590 indirect interventions (with teachers, parents, etc.) were made by counselors on behalf of students.

What were the counselors' reasons for intervening?

The following diagram shows the relative proportions of the counselors' reasons for intervening.

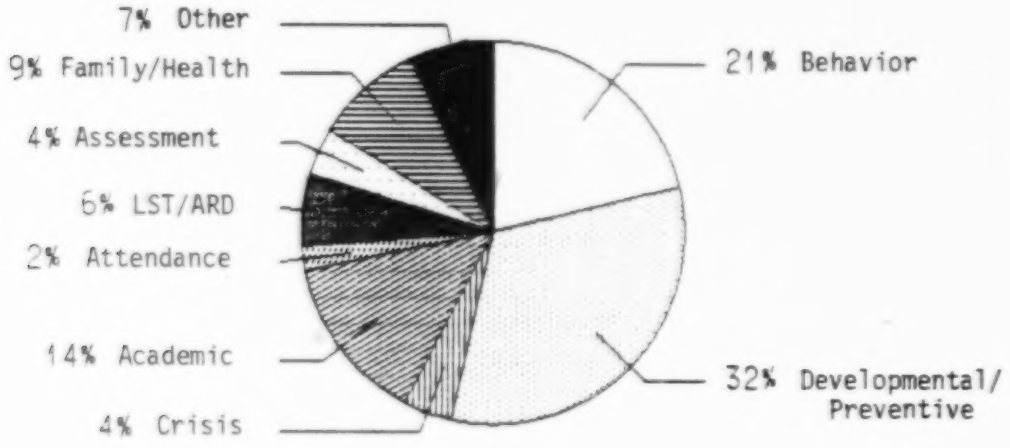

Figure 3. COUNSELORS' REASONS FOR INTERVENING.

- Crisis interventions accounted for 4% of the total number of interventions.
- Out of the 69,577 counseling interventions, over half were for developmental/preventive and behavioral reasons.

PROJECT ACHIEVE

How Successful was Project Achieve?

The Office of Research and Evaluation conducted a survey of districtwide administrators and teachers which included questions about Project Achieve. The results show that:

- 5,109 students were served, but
- Over one fourth of the administrators and one half of the teachers did not know about or did not utilize the program.
- Of those teachers who knew about Project Achieve, less than 25% of the teachers agreed that Project Achieve services were effective, and 13% felt that Project Achieve services were ineffective.
- No data are available on the Project's actual impact on reading proficiency. However, the secondary reading achievement for Austin high schools showed improvement this year on both the TABS and TAP. Thus, Project Achieve may have been responsible for some of these gains.

It is suggested that Project Achieve lacks visibility and that teachers may be receiving Project Achieve services without being aware of them.

TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION (TBE)

How successful was TBE?

T-tests were conducted to determine if the TBE students had made statistically significant gains in ITBS scores over the year. Figure 4 indicates:

- **Strong growth in all the areas measured for the seventh grade participants.** The growth ranged from 1.38 years in mathematics to a high of 1.46 in reading. This level of growth is well beyond the four to six months' average observed nationally for students at this entry level.

- The eighth-grade participants also gained more than expected for students of their entry level; however, the gains were not as far above the average as those of seventh graders.

Grade		N	1985 Posttest	1984 Pretest	Gain	SE	t	P
7	Reading	22	5.11	3.65	1.46	.10	15.59	<.0001
	Language	16	5.67	4.24	1.43	.26	5.46	<.0001
	Math	32	7.19	5.81	1.38	.17	8.21	<.0001
8	Reading	9	5.64	4.67	.97	.18	5.41	.0006
	Language	9	5.34	4.66	.68	.20	3.37	.0098
	Math	10	7.72	6.66	1.06	.39	2.73	.0231

Figure 4: MURCHISON t-TEST ON GRADE EQUIVALENT GAIN SCORES IN READING, LANGUAGE, AND MATH COMPUTATION.

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS

The 1985 results from the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills are presented in detail in the TABS Final Technical Report: Spring 1985, ORE Publication No. 84.23. An executive summary of this report (ORE Publication 84.25) has been distributed to principals and administrators and is available at ORE.

The general findings are:

- The majority of AISD students mastered TABS objectives in all three areas at all three grade levels.
- Fewer AISD students mastered TABS objectives in 1985 than in 1984.
- Across the Big Eight urban Texas districts, TABS mastery levels declined.
- The 1985 TABS appears to have been more difficult than the 1984 edition.
- AISD's rank among the Big Eight remained relatively stable with four ranks improving, two remaining unchanged, and three falling compared to 1984.
- Across the six years of TABS administrations, the percentage of students reaching mastery has increased. The greatest long-term gains were made by Hispanic and Black students. However, some of these gains were cut by 1984-to-1985 declines.
- The shifts in difficulty level of the TABS editions from 1980 to 1985 cause considerable concern in interpreting mastery levels. (This is true for all three parts of the test, but especially so for the writing portion of TABS.)

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (INFO)

In addition to streamlining preparation of the newly required performance reports, the INFO screen component of the District's emerging management information system is intended to address several other goals:

- To become a single, readily accessible source containing a variety of data already collected but presently reported under several different covers.
- To facilitate ORE's response to recurrent questions at the campus level and to facilitate informed decision-making across the District.
- To have the capacity to expand to meet currently unanticipated needs.
- To be easily updated.

A series of computer "screens" was developed which contains information about each school in the District on as many as 23 variables. The INFO screens are only a minor aspect of what eventually will become a single major data base referred to as "SCHCHAR" or School Characteristics File.

INFO clearly meets the short-term goals set down for it; it is a single, readily available, easily updated, and flexible information resource.

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